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1 No two states in the modern era have so defied classical definitions of nationalism as Pakistan and Israel. Created within a year of each other, in 1947 and 1948, respectively, both emerged as products of imperial alliances designed to respond to the concerns of a widely dispersed minority population—Muslims in India and Jews in Europe. What distinguished their claims to nationality was neither the historic right to a common territory nor membership in a blood-based community, but the fact of belonging to a shared religion, defined as 'Islam' for Pakistan and 'Judaism' for Israel. Today the two countries stand as the only examples of religious nationalism and, in doing so, appear to thwart every post-Enlightenment expectation of nationhood as a quintessentially secular project.

2 This paradox forms the subject of Faisal Devji's elegantly argued treatise, which explores the idea of Pakistan as an expression of Zionism, an ideology most commonly associated with the creation of the country's closest ideological twin—Israel. Devji's argument is simple: in order to understand the enigma represented by Pakistan and Israel we must cease to assume that either is a 'nation' in the conventional sense. Instead, Pakistan and Israel represent political manifestations of an ideal form of the Enlightenment state that harks back to an earlier moment in the Enlightenment when the coming together of peoples was seen to rest on (the fantasy of) political consent, legitimized by the force of an idea alone. In this sense, both countries stand apart from the trajectory of nineteenth-century European nationalism, which judged the nation to be the hallmark of a collective attachment born of shared blood and soil.

3 Thus, even while Pakistan and Israel represented a new kind of politics shaped by the collapse of the international order under the aegis of the League of Nations and its system of minority protection in the 1920s, both were in fact inspired by 'old-fashioned principles and ideas regarding a social contract' that looked to seventeenth-century European thought (Devji 2013: 106). Predicated on the idea of collective belonging, this version of the social contract had already found expression in the settler colonies of the New World, in southern Africa and Liberia. Indeed these settler colonies, Devji argues, constitute the real historical precursors of Pakistan and Israel. However, what distinguished Pakistan and Israel from these earlier state forms was the conscious invocation of religion as the basis of their social contracts.

4 Herein lies a fresh contradiction. For just as Pakistan and Israel could not be regarded as 'nations', where blood and soil played a part, the 'religion' they invoked bore little relation to 'the life world of belief and practice' (p. 5). Religion was not 'some old-fashioned theological entity, but an abstract and modern idea of belonging' (p. 47). In the case of Muslim nationalism, religion, namely, Islam, became no more than 'another aspect of the social contract [...] and even an empty idea [...] deployed to name only the most general and disparate of qualities, like a theologically indeterminate belief in the God of Muhammad' (p. 47). This bold proposition appears to chime closely with a broad swath of current scholarship on the discourse of 'Islam' in Pakistan.

5 In my own work I have suggested that the political articulation of Islam in Pakistan functioned as an abstraction largely to mask the lack of consensus over the terms of 'Islam' in public life—a condition that has deepened uncertainty about the country's national identity (Shaikh 2009). Others, such as the anthropologist, Katherine Ewing, have also drawn attention to the idea of 'Islam' in Pakistan as 'an empty container' (or to borrow a phrase from Slavoj Zizek, 'an unspecified object of desire'), whose specific contents had to remain hidden for fear of widening splits that divided the nation at birth (Ewing 1997: 67). By contrast, the focus of Devji's interest is neither Islam in Pakistan, nor indeed Judaism in Israel, after independence. Instead he is concerned to highlight the nationalist moment when religion as 'the empty idea of a national will untrammelled by anything given outside the idea itself' was pregnant with radical possibilities (Devji 2013: 47). This is not to say that Devji is indifferent to the trajectory of 'religion' in the unfolding of the social contract in Israel and Pakistan. As he observes, 'religion' as an idea of belonging that holds the 'nation' together still endures in one important respect in the life of these two independent states. For notwithstanding their statehood, both Israel and Pakistan still determine their nationality by reference neither to shared territory nor common descent but by the question: 'who is a Jew and who is a Muslim' (p. 48).

6 But the real value of exploring the implications of such an open-ended conception of 'religion' lies in the opportunity it offers to Devji to produce some arresting insights into the nature of Muslim nationalism in India. By far his most original assertion is the claim that the nebulous idea of 'Islam' favoured by early Muslim nationalists owed much to the outlook of prominent Shia Muslims, who gained influence in the All-India Muslim League (the main Muslim nationalist organization) soon after its creation in 1906. Drawn from the merchant and land-owning classes of western and northern India, they included luminaries such as the Aga Khan, head of the Ismaili Shia community; the wealthy industrialist, Adamjee Peerbhoy, and the feudal magnate, the Raja of Mahmudabad. All worked closely with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and himself a member of one of the Bombay Shia Muslim (Khoja) communities, and all promoted what

Devji calls a tradition of 'Shia ecumenism'. Studiously oblivious to sectarian differences, they sought the consolidation of a national Muslim 'community', whose contours were almost as obscure as the 'Islam' with which it was associated. But the promotion of this 'ecumenical Islam', informed by esoteric Shia doctrines of dissimulation and the shielding of private faith from public religion, reflected serious concerns that involved making space for the Shia Muslim minority in colonial India who, Devji maintains, were almost as wary of Sunni supremacy as of domination by the Hindu majority.

7 This argument signals a major departure from most accepted interpretations of Indian Muslim nationalism and sheds light on developments of vital import in Pakistan. It does so in three ways. First, it brings squarely into focus the Muslim merchant and trading classes of western India, whose influence in shaping the contours of Muslim nationalism has been largely overshadowed by the role of the north Indian Muslim gentry associated with what Devji identifies as 'the old politics of Aligarh' (p. 63) dominated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Second, while the relationship between Shia thinking and the League's appeal to a more ecumenical version of Islam would need to be more conclusively established, Devji's premise suggests new ways of thinking about Muslim nationalist politics as the site not only of 'communal' opposition between Hindus and Muslims but also of incipient intra-Muslim sectarian tensions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it serves as a powerful explanation of the sectarian violence that has steadily engulfed Pakistan since the creation of the state. The marginalisation of the country's Shia minority and the conflation of Islam with the narrow sectarian discourse of Sunnism in Pakistan today, as some others have also argued (Nasr 2000), stand as stark testimony to the collapse of the 'ecumenical religion' that was most vigorously championed by the League's Shia Muslim leaders.

8 In one of his rare forays into Pakistan's troubled present, Devji reflects on the demise of 'ecumenical Islam' in Pakistan and suggests that it must be seen as a collapse of the efforts of early Muslim nationalists to reject the idea of Islam as an external religious 'system' in favour of consolidating it as 'a new kind of public religion from the inside, while reserving their own devotions to a private faith' (Devji 2013: 221). It is important to note that, by and large, Devji reserves the use of the generic term 'early Muslim nationalists' not for the nineteenth-century politics of the North Indian Muslim gentry associated with the so-called 'Aligarh school', but rather for the first generation of leaders of the All-India Muslim League: while 'the former pressured the government for commercial and aristocratic causes [...] the organization of princely politics and the preservation of noble inheritances, the latter were concerned with liberal education, professional vocations and reserved places in the civil service' (p. 63). But the aspirations of the League's early leaders, such as the Aga Khan and Jinnah, who stood for an open-ended view of Islam resting on the separation of private belief from public expressions of membership in the religious community as a core part of their mission, were to be wrecked by the very 'logic of Muslim nationalism' (p. 247). It demanded the externalization of religion—a process that involved the destruction of every vestige of the 'dark matter' of 'geographical, historical and demographic inheritance', as well as the inner life of the believer, and their substitution by a programme of 'action' that insisted on 'the outward observance of Islam' (p. 247) as an index of political loyalty to the nationalist cause. Jinnah himself, Devji observes, came eventually to accept the 'new kind of system Islam represented' (p. 225). He cites as an example Jinnah's Eid day broadcast in 1939 in which Jinnah held Islam's 'particular significance' to lie in its meaning as 'action'

(p. 225). This emphasis on external observance and action transformed Islam into 'a national religion' (p. 244) that was as fatal to Islam's universalist enterprise as to the early Muslim nationalist promise of a secular order in Pakistan. But while it was perhaps inevitable that the creation of Pakistan would lead to the destruction of Islam as a universal idea—Devji describes Pakistan as the 'grave of Islam as an ecumenical religion' (p. 248)—arguably the greater paradox, according to Devji, is that today Islam's 'true home remains with the Muslim minority in India' (p. 250). Be that as it may, we are indebted to Devji for offering us a rare glimpse of that moment (however brief) in Pakistan's nationalist history when the language of a more inclusive, universalist and 'ecumenical' Islam held real sway. The fact that those singled out by him as responsible for projecting this vision of 'ecumenical Islam' were all Shias does however raise the question of whether Devji is also suggesting that Pakistan's adoption of a consciously Sunni profile over time, and the concomitant marginalization of its Shia minority, would have doomed the ecumenical project anyway. He does not say so explicitly, but there is no doubt that the great public dramas of blasphemy and accusations of desecration against sectarian rivals in Pakistan today are a tragic extension of that onward march to 'externalize religion completely as a kind of citizenship without politics' (p. 247)—or at least the kind of politics whose universality was once seen to have rested on protecting Islam as an abstract idea.

9 It is precisely the abstract idea of belonging to a common religion that animates Devji's understanding of Zionism as the bond linking the national narratives of Pakistan and Israel. Nevertheless, a few clarifications are in order. While many readers will naturally assume that the term 'Zion' in conjunction with Pakistan is intended to set the stage for a comparison of Pakistan and Israel, this is not (nor does Devji pretend it is) an exercise in comparative politics. There are, of course, some instructive parallels to be drawn: both Israel and Pakistan represent the successful culmination of 'minority' politics; both were cast as 'homelands' for their persecuted 'people'; both emerged under the control of a 'secular' leadership that instrumentalized the language of religion to service its cause, and both have struggled to overcome existential threats in a hostile neighbourhood (Kumaraswamy 1997).

10 But exploring these similarities, compelling as they are, is clearly not the object of Devji's interest. Rather, his focus is on Pakistan (albeit restricted to its formative phase) with the idea of Zion serving as a template to call attention to Pakistan as an exemplar of what he believes is a distinct form of 'political geography' that is at once indifferent to territory (holy or otherwise) and unresponsive to any claims of nationality as blood-based. In doing so, Devji hopes to lay bare the central contradiction at the heart of Zion that haunts Israel and Pakistan: 'the desire to both join and reject the world of nation states' (Devji 2013: 11). Its manifestation in Pakistan lay in the creation of a state that claimed to embody a Muslim 'nation' even while it rejected the idea of (Indian) nationalism. In Israel it found expression in the Jewish repudiation of European (majoritarian) nationalism, which resulted in a state stamped with a version of the very 'nationhood' it had renounced. This ambiguity, Devji suggests, has been amplified by a concern to anchor national claims in a supra-national agenda—in the case of Israel, the fate of world Jewry; in the case of Pakistan, the future of pan-Islamism.

11 The tensions generated by these ambiguities are treated by Devji with marvelous subtlety. But he also makes an exceptional contribution by teasing out, in ways rarely attempted before, comparisons between the global perspectives nurtured by Muslim

nationalists in India and the projection of Zionism as a 'world-historical' phenomenon by European Jewry in the context of a waning imperial landscape. Devji would not, of course, be the first to explore the ambiguous relationship between the Muslim minority 'crisis' in India and the Jewish minority 'question' in Europe. It has already received attention in the ground-breaking work of Aamir Mufti (2007) and his attempt to frame the crisis of Muslim identity in late colonial India in the light of debates on the assimilation and emancipation of the Jewish minority in post-Enlightenment Europe. Like Mufti, Devji is engaged by the choices made by Jewish and Muslim minority intellectuals forced to confront the implications of a liberal-democratic order that presupposed rule by national majorities. And like Mufti, Devji is also concerned to explore how both Muslims and Jews in India and Europe, respectively, resisted not only their standing as a minority but also their status as pariahs. But where Mufti fell somewhat short in demonstrating how and by what means perceptions of the 'Jewish question' travelled or found their way into the discourse of Indian Muslim intellectuals in late colonial India, Devji is steadfast in pursuing the question.

12 The role of the Aga Khan—a key figure in the firmament of Muslim nationalist politics in India in the 1930s—appears to have been particularly crucial. Inspired by parallels between Zionist demands for a homeland under Ottoman jurisdiction and ever insistent calls for greater Muslim autonomy under British colonial rule in India, he found common cause in their respective campaigns in spite of differences in scale involved in 'settling' the claims of the two minorities. At the heart of the Aga Khan's vision lays a new pluralistic, multi-national and multi-racial order that was indebted to an imperial landscape. This vision shaped his understanding of the Ottoman and British imperial missions—a world he was persuaded would resolve, once and for all, 'the problem with numbers' that militated against the interests of minorities (Devji 2013: 49-88). But what is striking about the Aga Khan's idiosyncratic conception of a new world order is not so much its endorsement of early Zionism but its legacy in shaping the parameters of Muslim nationalist discourse in India. His plans for a South Asiatic Federation that would re-organize India along lines of what Devji calls 'a sub-imperial order of her own' (p. 70), was intended simultaneously to lift Muslims out of their status as a minority and, by so doing, render 'both categories, majority as well as minority, irrelevant in the vast and plural sub-empire that India was meant to dominate' (p. 74).

13 Nowhere did the gist of this idea find a louder echo than in the demand for 'Hindu-Muslim parity' that surfaced in opposition to the Indian nationalist narrative in the decade leading up to the creation of Pakistan. Deployed by Jinnah as a weapon against the perceived 'majoritarian' bias of the nationalist programme favoured by the Indian National Congress, the concept of Hindu-Muslim parity aimed at nothing less than to render the logic of numbers invoked by the nation-state irrelevant. With hindsight it now appears as a neat extension of the Aga Khan's vision of a post-imperial order in which (minority) Muslims could legitimately claim the same status as (majority) Hindus without necessarily requiring a 'national state' of their own—a view, it is worth noting, that continues to resonate today among some Pakistani historians who argue that 'Jinnah's Pakistan' did not necessarily entail the Partition of India or a separate Muslim state (Jalal 1985). Whatever the merits of this view (and Devji is circumspect about them), it underscores the essential contradiction of Zionist nationalism, which not only rejected any intrinsic link between the nation and the state but which also envisioned relegating the nation-state to 'a mere relic of tradition' (Devji 2013: 79).

14 As revealing as these insights are, the comparison between the minority nationalisms of Pakistan and Israel poses some analytical problems. The most important of these pertains to the soundness of drawing parallels between the fundamentally different 'settlements' to resolve the Jewish and Muslim 'problems' in Europe and India, respectively. This is not so much to invoke claims of Jewish exceptionalism as to raise well-founded doubts about comparing a 'settlement' necessitated by the systematic ethnic genocide of Jews in Europe with one resulting from protracted constitutional negotiations involving Muslim leaders in colonial India, even if the breakdown of those negotiations did eventually lead to the violent uprooting of millions of people.

15 Another problem arises from the failure to adequately distinguish between the nationalist impulses of a historically disempowered minority (European Jews) with those of a once dominant minority (Indian Muslims). For it would seem reasonable to assume that, whereas for European Jews the escape from minority status to statehood offered an escape from centuries of actual discrimination and persecution, Muslim minority politics in colonial India, as I have argued elsewhere (Shaikh 1989), was intimately tied both to the experience of the loss of Muslim power in India and to deep-rooted assumptions about the management of power as a Muslim prerogative.

16 Other questions of doubtful comparison also present themselves. While it is true that Muslim nationalism was inspired neither by claims to ancestral Muslim lands nor reference to common biological descent, both were indisputably key features in the construction of Jewish nationalism. It is hard to ignore the significance of the Zionist connection to the territory of Israel or the prime importance given to the idea of a 'Jewish people', who are presumed to have descended from common biological stock. Although revisionist historians; such as Shlomo Sand, have in recent years strongly challenged what they call the 'mythistory' of a 'Jewish people' (Sand 2009) with a common ethnic lineage and an inalienable 'right of return' to the 'land of Israel' (Sand 2012), the contestation aroused by this debate rarely figures in Devji's analysis of Zionism as a 'national' construction. Indeed, the vital difference between Israel and Pakistan on the issue of the 'right of return' (or its Hebrew equivalent, *aliyah*) and its central place in Zionist thinking receives little or no attention. This oversight raises further questions about drawing parallels between two states with putative Zionist identities in which one would expressly endorse the claim of every member of world Jewry to claim citizenship of the state of Israel while the other would deny (as it does) to Muslims in India, to say nothing of the global Muslim diaspora, any such prospect in the state of Pakistan.

17 A subsidiary concern pertains to Devji's discussion of the role of Dalit politics in defining the Zionist contours of Pakistan, which appears as something of an outlier (Devji 2013: 163-200). This is not to say that Muslim nationalism in British India did not galvanise Dalit politics, as is made abundantly clear by Devji in his analysis of the close if convoluted relationship between the Dalit leader, B.R. Ambedkar and Jinnah. Rather, it is to question whether the identity politics of caste, such as outlined here, helps furnish the tools to refine our understanding of Muslim nationalism as an expression of Zionism. This is certainly debatable when set against the idea of Jewish Zionism and its emphasis on a 'Jewish people' of common biological origin with an alienable right to the land of Israel although less so perhaps in the Devjian sense of Zionism as a 'political form in which nationality is defined by the rejection of an old land for a new, thus attenuating the historical role that blood and soil play in the language of Old World nationalism' (p. 3). For there are of course, as Devji observes, some symbolic parallels between the condition

of 'Untouchability' attached to Dalits and the status of the pariah ascribed to Jews in Europe although less so (I would contend) to Muslims in British India. Nevertheless, there remains the risk of over-working these parallels and obscuring in the process the significance of Dalit politics as arguably no more than a field of opportunity for Muslim nationalists to press their case.

18 These reservations are not intended to diminish either the vigour or the originality of Devji's thinking on the Zionist roots of Muslim nationalism, where the idea of belonging (in this case to a shared religion) took precedence over any role attributed to blood and soil as the basis of nationhood.

19 Nowhere is this argument more finely tuned than in Devji's discussion of the demand for Pakistan and its rejection of history and territory as defining features of the nation. It was Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the Indian National Congress and a staunch opponent of the Muslim nationalist agenda, who famously declared that in order for Muslims in India to claim nationhood they had first to reject the historical past they shared with other communities in India. But Nehru's understanding of a shared historical past as fundamental to the making of a nation was diametrically at odds with Muslim nationalist assumptions. For the poet and thinker, Muhammad Iqbal, who is today revered in Pakistan as the high priest of Muslim nationalism, the past had nothing to do with 'national history' conceived of in the Nehruvian sense as an interactive, let alone 'syncretic', process unfolding over time. (Shaikh 2005: 377). On the contrary, the past for Iqbal could only be understood as 'universal history', evocative of Islam as a universal idea that transcended serial time associated with 'national history'. So-called 'Muslim territories', which were eventually designated as Pakistan, also carried no meaning for Iqbal as 'national' territories: 'these lands, together with their inhabitants' constituted for him 'nothing more than instances of Islam as a form of the universal idea' (Devji 2013: 119). While this 'world-historical perspective' of Indian Muslims favoured by Iqbal may have been neatly tailored to contest the position of Indian Muslims as a minority, Devji makes a persuasive case in suggesting that it also pointed to a new kind of 'national' politics that 'diverged significantly from any vision retailed by Congress' (p. 118) through its global reach and international orientation. What emerges from this is a fresh understanding of Pakistan as an idea that transcended the limits of the colonial state to play out on a larger international stage—another example, one might say, of the Zionist paradox that would internationalise the nation.

20 But there was here also a complex dynamic at work that was more suggestive of Muslim nationalist ambivalence rather than the outright rejection of a shared, potentially 'national', past with other communities in India. This ambivalence was particularly on show in attempts by Muslim nationalists to highlight their contribution to the development of a composite Indian culture while simultaneously justifying the creation of a separate Muslim 'nation' by blaming their Hindu counterparts for willfully destroying communal co-existence. Devji shows how this curious 'denial of Muslim responsibility for their own nationalism' (p. 93) resonated in the thinking of leading stalwarts of the League, including the eminent nationalist historian, I.H. Qureshi and the senior Muslim politician, Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, one of Jinnah's closest allies. While Devji makes no reference to it, it is worth noting that much of this ambivalence persists in Pakistan, where some historians[1] and sections of liberal public opinion[2] are at pains to demonstrate that Pakistan was a tragic accident that could have been avoided had

Jinnah's proposals for an honourable settlement not been obstructed by Nehru's arrogance and the divisive agenda of his Hindu nationalist peers in Congress.

21 Jinnah himself was, of course, deeply ambivalent (if not hostile) to the idea of a shared historical past. His many speeches and statements serve as ample proof that it was not so much the discourse of history, but the language of law that animated his politics. Obsessed with upholding abstract principles that were by definition unhistorical, Jinnah laboured hard 'to lift the language of Indian politics out of the swamp of history' (p. 100). This, Devji argues, was consistent with Jinnah's idea of 'nationality' as no more than a legal and constitutional category that was divorced from history, fixated on the present and oriented to the future. The Muslim 'nation' then had 'no positive content of its own' (p. 105), representing for Jinnah merely an index of belonging designed to facilitate a new social contract between equals in which neither numbers nor claims to territory would play a part...

22 Here again is a powerful re-statement of Devji's larger argument about Zionism as a distinct form of national politics that is at once old-fashioned in its invocation of a social contract that predates the age of nationalism and forward-looking in its vision of a world detached from history. But it also has a bearing on our understanding of Indian Muslim nationalism as a new kind of 'national' politics, where the primacy accorded to 'the principle of parity in contract' obviated the need for the 'nation' to 'exist in any substantive sense as a sovereign polity' (p. 106). As such it offers a compelling explanation of the conundrum that has long plagued historians of Partition: namely, Jinnah's extraordinary decision to accept Britain's Cabinet Mission Plan for India in 1946, which denied sovereign Muslim nationhood and proposed instead a loose Indian federation that categorically endorsed the principle of Hindu-Muslim parity.

23 But is Devji here proposing merely another version of the claim that Jinnah's Pakistan was nothing but a bargaining ploy ever amenable to negotiation? It would seem not. For what made Jinnah's Pakistan 'negotiable' was not some calculated interest with open-ended goals, but a specific understanding of the nation as the outcome of an act of pure volition devoid of inherited history or attachment to land and lineage. Devji sets this bold claim against his understanding of 'Enlightenment politics', which he illustrates by way of Voltaire's tragedy, *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophète* (1736), set in Mecca on the eve of the Islamic conquest. It juxtaposes the 'revolutionary' and 'fanatical' 'politics of reason' represented by Islam and its Prophet, Mahomet (Muhammad), against the web of inherited customs and traditions defended by the elderly Meccan leader, Zopire. Devji's aim here is to draw a parallel between 'the purely abstract universality of the idea' (Devji 2013: 133) as conveyed by the Enlightenment 'politics of reason' and Jinnah's own 'politics of principle', which Devji suggests was more immediately inspired by John Morley's *Essay on Compromise*—a book concerned with upholding principles that Jinnah is on record as recommending to his followers to read 'not only once but over and over again' (p. 140). It was this insistence on principle, Devji argues, that served as fuel to promote Jinnah's abstract idea of the nation as a concept divorced from the particularities of geography and the legacies of history. At the same time, it would be hard to ignore the constraints imposed on Jinnah's vision by the contextual realities arising from the uneven demographic distribution of Muslims across different regions in India with vastly different cultural traditions. These circumstances precluding any idea of the nation couched in the language of territorial and historical integrity also favoured an anti-territorial view of the Muslim nation and national sovereignty. They, no less than matters

of principle, led Jinnah to invoke the Muslim nation in abstract terms as a 'constitutional category' (p. 105). But their adoption also produced a certain distorted logic. As Tahir Hasnain Naqvi (2010: 74) has shown, it allowed Jinnah to hail the 'exemplary sacrifices' of Muslims in the Hindu-majority states to the cause of Pakistan even while advising them to 'stick to their respective homelands' and live as Indian citizens. And while berating the 'state of slumber' that afflicted Muslims in Muslim-majority areas, he was forced to endorse their claim to be recognised as the undisputed citizens of the territorial state of Pakistan. It was this nationalist narrative still struggling to reconcile the language of territorial belonging with exclusion that, Naqvi argues, 'made it possible for Jinnah to assert without a sense of contradiction that he had 'created' Pakistan for the very Muslims he expected to 'stick' to India.'

24 In a sustained and moving digression on Jinnah's 'politics of negation', Devji looks for its sources in the 'fanatical' politics of the Enlightenment, where abstract logic was used to destroy everything represented in nature and history. This 'demonic' force, Devji argues, was imbibed by Jinnah and found lyrical expression in the poetry of Iqbal. While the former relied on it to sustain the negative conduct of his politics, the latter invoked it to voice his admiration of Satan's defiant rejection of paradise. Both aimed to capture the spirit of a 'free-floating and self-possessed nation that rejected its grounding in nature or history' (Devji 2013: 148). In doing so, both projected a vision that was as radical and fantastical in its politics as any revolutionary ideal heralding the onset of a new era—a Year One—purged of the past and its memory.

25 Devji's determined pursuit of this vision and its meaning for Pakistan today is an astonishing achievement even if the complexity of his argument might leave some readers feeling unduly unchallenged. Not for him the minutiae of what Sunil Khilnani has mocked as the 'pointillism' of subaltern historians (Khilnani 1997: 3) nor the tangled thicket of interests and intentionality beloved of the so-called Cambridge School of Indian History. Instead what Devji offers us is a breath-taking vista—a vista as much of the past as the future of Pakistan. While his approach with its pointed emphasis on the broad 'forms of argumentation and lines of reasoning' (Devji 2013: 9) that inspired Muslim nationalism will sit uncomfortably with more instrumental interpretations of Pakistan that regard it as the product of a confluence of interests, Devji goes beyond this limited debate by arguing, rightly, that what sets ideas apart from 'transient' interests is their power to '[live] beyond the political conjunctures within which they were produced to shape new futures' (p. 8). And it is precisely this keen eye to the future of Pakistan combined with a profound consciousness of the ambiguity of its nationalist past that makes Devji one of the finest chroniclers of this troubled country.

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NOTES

1. Reiterating Jinnah's desire to avert the partition of India and surrender his demand for Pakistan in exchange for what he judged as a fair constitutional settlement under the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, which provided for a loose federation of provinces rather than the creation of a sovereign Muslim state, the historian, Ayesha Jalal (2014: 36-38), observes: 'This was the second time in two years that Jinnah had turned down the offer of 'Pakistan' [...] But Congress had no intention of honouring [the Plan] [...] Nehru effectively negating Congress's [earlier] acceptance... Congress's change of heart required abandoning two of its oldest and most sacred principles—the unity of India and full independence. But the advantages of the compromise far outweighed the disadvantages [...] Moreover by cutting its losses and effectively demanding partition, Congress could rid itself of Jinnah and the League and settle down to ruling three-fourths of India according to its unfettered will'.

2. A recent article published in the *Daily Times* (Lahore) also drew attention to the unintended consequences forced on Jinnah by an intransigent Congress unwilling to negotiate a fair constitutional settlement between Hindus and Muslims. Its author states 'The fact is that Jinnah despite not having gotten quite what he wanted, i.e. a confederation of two federations within a United India, seemed quite happy with the federal solution laid down by the Plan. [...] [But] Congress sought to wreck the Plan [and] had already made up its mind [...] This promoted (sic) Jinnah to tell Kuldip Nayyar [the veteran Indian journalist] 'Young man, don't blame me for partition, it is Nehru who is responsible for this' (Latif Hamdani 2012).

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